

PACKAGE FOR A LIQUID SAMPLE AND AN ASSOCIATED METHOD FOR PACKAGING A LIQUID SAMPLE

CROSS RELATED APPLICATION

This application is a continuation-in-part of application Ser. No. 392,343 filed Aug. 11, 1989, now U.S. Pat. No. 4,941,574.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The invention relates to a package for a liquid sample and to a method for packaging a liquid sample.

DESCRIPTION OF PRIOR ART

There are many circumstances in which it is desirable to furnish liquid samples to the general public in an amount sufficient to allow more than one application. Commonly, and despite very high cost, the liquid sample is contained in a small vial attached to a printed card and frequently distributed at points of sale. This type of sample is rarely used in direct mail because it requires special packaging at considerable additional expense.

It is known to furnish samples, for example of perfumes, as part of brand advertisements in magazines. Magazine samples are generally comprised of micro-encapsulated liquid in one of a number of formats that require suitable activation, such as rubbing, scratching, or tearing. In the course of delivery to the home, the magazine is subjected to handling which causes a large number of capsules to rupture, effectively prematurely activating any samples contained therein. Hence, when there are two or more different samples in the same magazine, it may not be possible to distinguish the individual odor of any one sample. Not only are the samples thereby rendered useless, but should the samples be activated to any great extent, the collective residue causes the entire magazine to smell.

Another major form of perfume promotion is enclosures in department store billing. These often include samples of the above-described micro-encapsulation type but also may be in "blotter" form. Namely, paper blotters are impregnated with liquid and then placed in a wrapper of cellophane or plastic which prevents the liquid, but not the odor, from permeating the enclosure.

Heretofore, there has not been any satisfactory production of a package which will enable a liquid sample to be contained in a flat package in protected fashion so that it can be sent through the mail, for example, as a promotional item in a magazine.

In my earlier U.S. Pat. Nos. 4,567,613, and 4,633,533, I have disclosed various articles and methods for dispensing liquids but I have not disclosed any method or means whereby a small sample of liquid can be packaged in a liquid state in a package which is readily handled and which protects the sample.

In co-pending application Ser. No. 318,909, I have disclosed an article in which a liquid sample can be self-contained, however the article is capable of being crushed and allowing leakage of the sample.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

An object of the invention is to provide a method in which a small liquid sample, such as a perfume, can be packaged for use by a person.

A further object of the invention is to provide a package for such a liquid sample in which the liquid is visible.

Yet another object of the invention is to provide a method by which the liquid sample is contained in a flexible envelope which has a protective enclosure which enables the package to be manually manipulated while isolating the package from application of squeezing forces on the envelope.

Another object of the invention is to provide a method in which the envelope containing the liquid sample can be readily disconnected from the enclosure.

Another object of the invention is to permit the easy opening of the envelope without spillage or misapplication of the liquid. According to a feature of the invention, the envelope can be opened by unpeeling one layer of the envelope from another.

Another object of the invention is to provide a method in which the liquid sample can be packaged in an inexpensive and simple manner.

Another object of the invention is to provide a package for a liquid sample which will be only a fraction of the cost of a glass or plastic vial.

Another object of the invention is to provide a package for a liquid sample in which the liquid sample is protected so that the package can be sent through the mail especially as an insert in a magazine without release of the liquid or its scent.

Another object of the invention is to provide a package in which the envelope containing the liquid sample is removed from the enclosure before the user opens the envelope to gain access to the liquid sample. Thereby, when the package is included as an insert in a magazine, no odor will be produced until the user removes and opens the envelope. Consequently, a number of sample can be sent together without any danger of commingling of odors thereby preserving the integrity of the samples.

A further object of the invention is to provide a package which is adapted to more viscous samples, such as lipstick.

In accordance with the above and further objects of the invention, a method is provided in which a fluid sample is sealed in an envelope of non-permeable film material and the envelope is supported by a protective enclosure having greater rigidity than the envelope by engaging the envelope around a portion of its perimetral extent to leave the envelope exposed outside the engaged portion and free and unsupported along its remaining perimetral portion, the protective enclosure being of a thickness so that the envelope will be recessed below the outer surfaces of the enclosure.

In further accordance with the invention, the envelope is removed from the enclosure by manually engaging the exposed portion of the envelope and pulling with sufficient force to overcome the support of the envelope by the enclosure.

In accordance with one embodiment of the invention, the envelope is supported within the enclosure by sandwiching the engaged portion of its perimetral extent between two layers of the material of the enclosure, said layers being flat and holding the envelope in flat coplanar relation with the enclosure.

A further object of the invention is to provide a package for a liquid sample in which the envelope containing the liquid sample will be accessible and at the same time protected so that it can be enclosed as a promotional item, for example, in a magazine.